



## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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### **Agencies to celebrate neonatal survival success in Alaska**

*Combined effort moves Alaska from worst to first*

ANCHORAGE — Alaska babies between 0 and 28 days old (neonatal) now have the lowest mortality rate in the nation. From rates as high as 8.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in the early 1980s, to 2.27 deaths per 1,000 live births, according to the most recent data for infants born in 2008.

Advances in the care of mothers and their newly born children have saved hundreds of lives in Alaska over the past 30 years. Agencies involved with the health care of pregnant women and their newborn infants will gather for a celebration of Alaska's neonatal survival rate climb from "worst to first" Friday, Oct. 28, 2011, at Providence Alaska Medical Center, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

"What we're really celebrating is the development of a system of care for pregnant women and newborns," said Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch, chief of the Department of Health and Social Services' Section of Women's, Children's and Family Health. "It's a team effort. Health aides, community physicians, hospitals, neonatologists, perinatologists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, conscientious parents and so many others — everyone plays a part in recognizing when a pregnant woman or her newborn needs specialized care. We want to recognize the work of all contributors to this success story."

The celebration is being hosted by the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership and will feature entertainment, hors d'oeuvres, and an awards presentation.

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